

ten thousand represents the absolutely poor who now live under the most unhygienic conditions; but before dying they will have cost the community four million two hundred and thirty-four thousand dollars."

(To be continued.)

WHAT THE SUPERINTENDENT GETS IN HER MAILS

By MARY AGNES SNIVELY

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IN reading a copy of the *Ladies' Home Journal* not long ago my eye caught these words, "What the President Gets in His Mail." This led me to think that possibly some of the readers of *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* might care to know something about the exacting and unremunerated duties which confront the superintendent of a hospital in her position as public servant, consequently a few specimen letters, all of which are genuine, are appended:

Mr. A., chairman of the Hospital Board of Trusts, writes: "We are just now on the subject of hospital furnishing, and know you are an enthusiast on that subject. Would you mind sending me a list of necessary kitchen articles, from an egg-beater to a kitchen range?"

Mr. B. sends a printed list of questions to be answered covering a page of foolscap, beginning with: "What kinds of beds have you in your public wards? Kinds of springs and mattresses? Cost and where obtainable?" and ending with: "How do you manage as to patients sent from outside the city, also city patients? Who pays? Is surgery included? How is your medical staff appointed, also consultants?"

Miss C. has just accepted a hospital position and would like a complete list of articles necessary for a private room. Would like an estimate regarding number of sheets, pillow-cases, towels, etc., as well as china and cutlery, and the probable cost for furnishing such a room. She encloses a list of articles for a public ward with the request that this be corrected or revised.

Dr. D. has opened a private hospital and wishes to secure a head nurse possessed of every possible qualification and virtue, and states that he is prepared to offer a salary of fifteen dollars per month, with board, room, and laundry included, but rather than not get the right sort of woman he would be willing to go as high as twenty dollars per month, provided she came three months on trial.

A perplexed superintendent of nurses states her troubles thus: "I am writing you regarding matters of discipline in connection with train-

ing-schools and would like to know: When nurses are off duty are they allowed to see gentlemen friends at their home? Are they allowed to meet gentlemen outside and accept their company as far as the residence? What is your general rule regarding the company and movements of nurses when off duty? I think nurses are a great bother anyway; they are always wanting something or other. Hospital life at best is an uncertain condition, and one never knows when matters may arise which may so involve the management that the honest efforts of the superintendent may be misunderstood, and her influence may be neutralized if not altogether destroyed."

A literary lady wants to place a little matter before the superintendent which she explains as follows: "Our little village was without a public library, so, in order to raise funds for this purpose, we decided upon a 'Japanese tea.' For the sum of fifteen cents the purchaser was provided with a nice cup of tea, and was allowed to become the possessor of the cup and saucer in which it was served. I was chosen by the Ladies' Committee to purchase the requisite number of cups and saucers, and in doing this I overestimated the number required by about six dozen. The 'tea' was a success, but I am now in the very unpleasant position of having this large number of cups and saucers on my hands, and as everybody in the village has already bought one, it is not possible to dispose of any more here. The thought occurred to me that possibly you might manage to sell them to the nurses in your school. I know nurses are generally fond of having pretty cups and saucers in their rooms, and these they could have at a lower cost than they are selling for down town. Kindly let me hear from you at once, as this is a matter of great importance to me."

On a particularly busy morning an enthusiastic young woman is ushered into the office. She greets the superintendent gushingly, telling her she has made up her mind to enter a hospital. (She expects this remark to make a profound impression.) She proceeds: "I want you to tell me if you think I will make a good nurse. I'd like to be *sure* on that point, for I would not like to fail, you know. I've had my head examined and the phrenologist said I was adapted for nursing, and when mother was ill the doctor said to me, 'Why don't you go into a training-school?' I think I'll go to New York, but I have come to ask your advice about the different schools, and I want you to give me some addresses in Philadelphia and Boston as well, with your private opinion regarding the relative merits of these schools."

The door closes, and as the young lady disappears a middle-aged woman is shown in, bringing with her a daughter aged sixteen years. The mother looks about in a frightened way, to be assured she is alone

with the superintendent, then asks distractedly, "Are you the matron of the Lying-in State Hospital?"

The superintendent, alone once more, turns to her morning mail, and finds a note from an editorial friend requesting an article for the next issue of his periodical entitled "A Nurse's Duties in a Hospital from Early Morn till Dewy Eve."

A second letter reads: "Have you anyone with you whom you could recommend as being able and willing to take a situation in the country? Our house is large, and I want a girl or woman able to clean floors, wash, iron, and do general plain cooking, able to assist in milking if necessary. Must be careful, clean, and nice-mannered, an able woman for general work in a country place. My work is not heavy country work, but I am particular, and want it done *well* and *clean*."

The third one is still more interesting: "Dear Madam, I don't know your name; however, I want you to tell all the nurses that you have heard from me, and that I want them to write to me, for I dearly love them all, and you too, whether I know you or not. I have found the dear, kind nurses to be loving and obliging, and I know how glad the poor, suffering patients were to get a paper to read to help to take their thoughts off their pain, and I now think I have got a lovely magazine that everyone can afford to take. It costs only twelve cents a year. It contains over thirty pages, stories and fancy work, and recipes and fashions. I want you to please tell the patients about it. They can have it sent to the hospital or to their own homes. Please try and get all you can and send them to me by the 25th of this month. I will reward you for your trouble. Excuse this scribbling, but I am doing this for the sake of some poor patient. I hope this will catch some of the dear nurses."

HYGIENE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

By EVELLEEN HARRISON

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It may appear to the "initiated" that I have entered overmuch into the details of the preparation for a surgical operation, but my department is dedicated more especially to the requirements of the "home nurses,"—viz., members of the family who are often called upon in the absence of a trained nurse to supply her place as far as lies in their power.

I am well aware that it would be difficult—I might say impossible—